

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

October 20, 2016



Rezoning case no. RZ 16-20: Bio Corridor Property Owners Association

CASE DESCRIPTION: a request to amend the development plan of a previously-approved Planned Development – Mixed Use District (PD-M)

LOCATION: northwest side of the intersection of South Traditions Drive and HSC Parkway

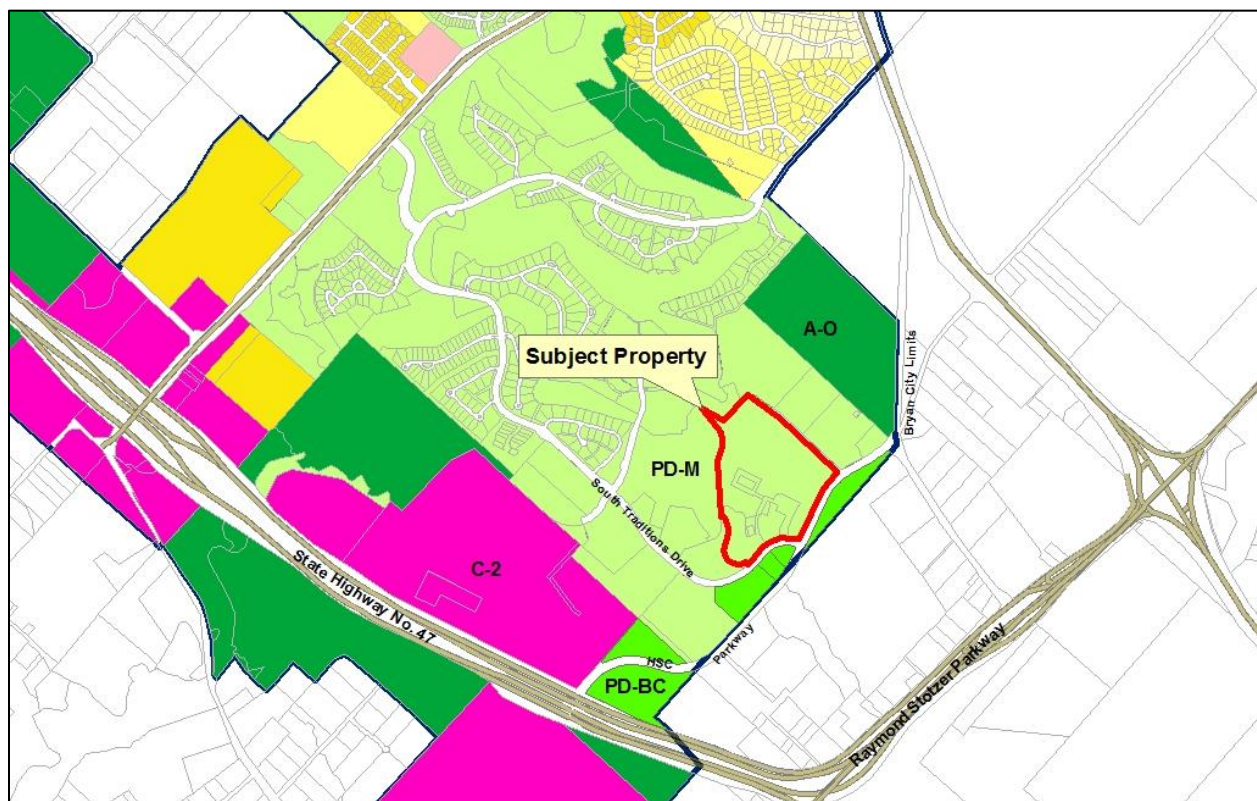
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: all of Phases 27 and 30 in The Traditions Subdivision and approximately 44 acres of land out of the John H. Jones Survey, A-26

EXISTING LAND USE: vacant land

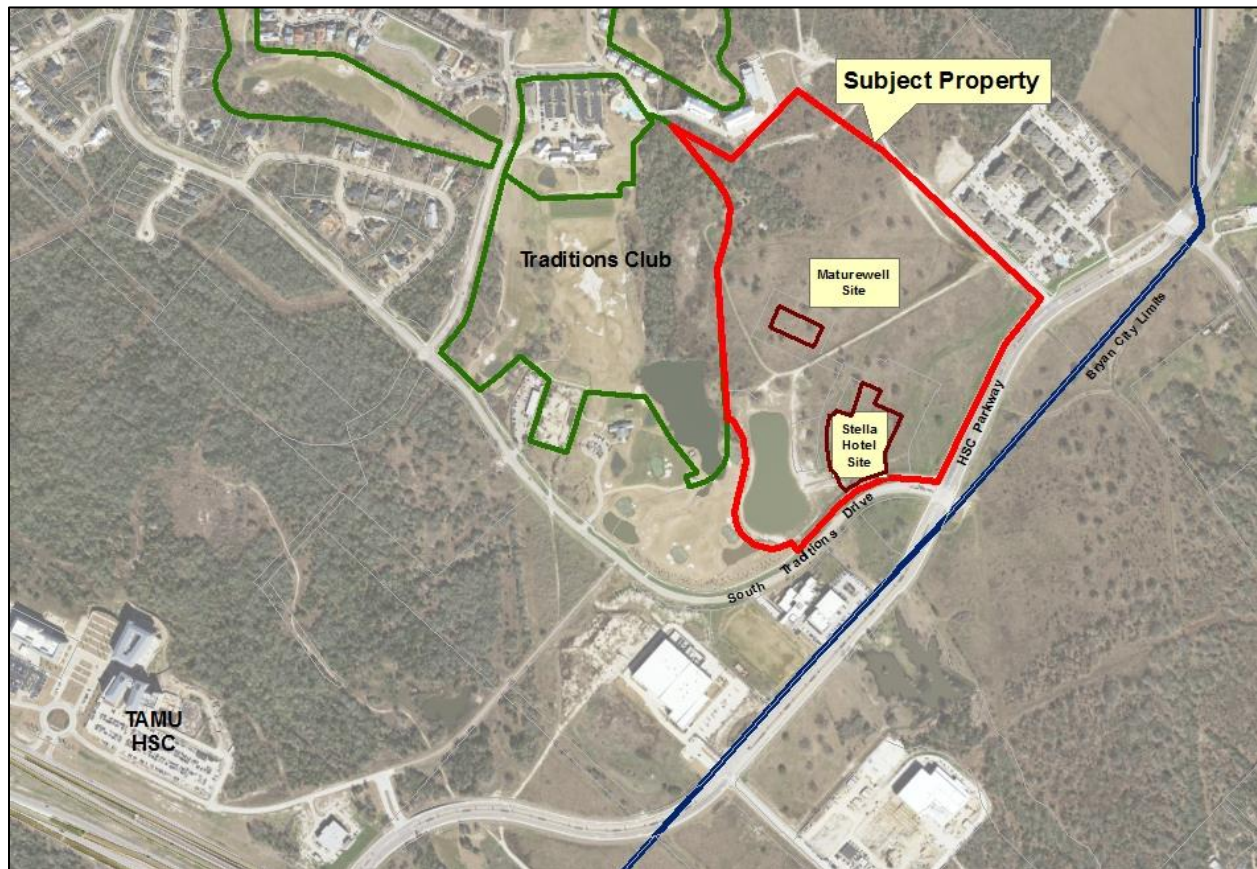
APPLICANT(S): Bio Corridor Property Owners Association

STAFF CONTACT: Randy Haynes, AICP, Senior Planner

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends **approval** of the proposed development plan amendment.



AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH:



BACKGROUND:

In 2001, the Bryan City Council approved rezoning case no. RZ01-05 which established the 790-acre planned development zoning district referred to as The Traditions at University Ranch. As adopted, the Traditions development plan was primarily focused on the residential portions of the project. Although retail and multifamily uses were envisioned and provided for, until recently, such development had not occurred.

In June 2015, the City Council approved an amendment to the development plan on a portion of the original 790-acre tract to more specifically define and regulate development standards for the non-residential development (known as Atlas); the stated intent being to ensure and safeguard the high-quality planning and construction needed to support the successful, sustainable business climate envisioned by past City Councils.

The applicant, The BioCorridor Property Owners Association, is acting on behalf of several property owners possessing interest in property within the existing Atlas portion of the Traditions Planned Development. The other signatories to the application are Atlas Hotels, L.P.; Atlas MOB 1, L.L.C.; Bryan Traditions, L.P. and Bryan Commerce and Development, Inc. At the time this report was being compiled, the Board of Bryan Commerce and Development (BCD) had not authorized involvement in the request to amend the plan. Approval of the requested amendment is contingent upon BCD action to authorize participation in the request.

To continue the process of regulating by adopting tightly controlled standards, the applicant, The Bio Corridor Property Owners Association, propose to amend the previously approved development plan by adding specific signage standards to control the design, appearance, materials, size and location of site identification, traffic control and wayfinding signage.

Only a portion of text within the previously approved development plan that sets out regulations and standards for signage within the district is proposed to be amended. In addition, an appendix is proposed to illustrate very specifically the allowed signage type, design and location. The proposed added text is indicated in red below and the proposed appendix is attached to this report along with the full text of the current plan.

PROPOSED PLAN TEXT AMENDMENT SHOWN IN RED:

- 1) Freestanding Signage: *With the exception of the standards for signs specifically outlined in Appendix 1*, freestanding signage within the development shall be of the monument type and have a maximum height of 6 feet and a maximum overall area of 50 square feet. One such monument sign shall be permitted for any single use exclusively occupying a separate freestanding structure with more than 1,500 square feet of gross floor area.
 - a) A maximum of two monument signs shall be allowed within a landscape reserve area along the right of way lines of South Traditions Drive and HSC Parkway. Independent of surrounding landscaping or other such natural materials, such signage shall have a maximum height of 8 feet and a maximum overall area of 64 square feet.
 - b) Pole mounted signs shall be prohibited.
 - c) All signage illumination shall be provided with direct or halo-style lighting only.
 - d) Internally illuminated thermoformed plastic signs shall be prohibited.

RELATION TO BRYAN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

The City of Bryan's Comprehensive Plan includes policy recommendations related to the various physical development aspects of the community. Identified by the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee and the public was the need to facilitate development. There was broad consensus that development in Bryan needs to be attractive and efficient while also making the best use of available land, investment and resources. The plan further states that appearance has a profound impact on perceptions about the city and that future projects should place a high value on aesthetics and community appearance.

ANALYSIS:

In making its recommendation regarding a proposed zoning change, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall consider the following factors.

1. Whether the uses permitted by the proposed change will be appropriate in the immediate area concerned; relationship to general area and the City as a whole.

The subject property lies between the residential portion of The Traditions development to the northwest, the Traditions Country Club and casitas to the north, the Hawthorne at Traditions apartment community to the east, and the Texas A&M Health Science Center to the southwest. Staff contends that the applicant's proposal to define and regulate the appearance of the area by the adoption of specific standards while employing an upscale, unified design aesthetic to control the design, appearance, materials, size and location of site identification, traffic control and wayfinding signage will be appropriate in the immediate area and will further enhance the previous and future public and private investment.

2. Whether the proposed change is in accord with any existing or proposed plans for providing public schools, streets, water supply, sanitary sewers, and other utilities to the area and shall note the findings.

Since its inception, The Traditions Subdivision has been planned as a community which will grow substantially to encompass over 1,000 acres of developed area. To that end, public infrastructure capacity to support that level of development has been provided and extended as development has occurred.

3. The amount of vacant land currently classified for similar development in the vicinity and elsewhere in the City, and any special circumstances which may make a substantial part of such vacant land unavailable for development.

The closest vacant land available that would suitably accommodate similar development is a 120-acre tract located generally west of the subject property. Staff believes that if the proposed amendment to the previously approved mixed use development plan were approved for the subject property, such an approval would not make land classified for similar development in the vicinity and elsewhere in the City unavailable for development.

4. The recent rate at which land is being developed in the same zoning classification as the request, particularly in the vicinity of the proposed change.

Staff finds that the mixed use development such as the one that exists on the subject property is unique in Bryan. Staff also finds that large scale retail development is occurring at a moderate pace elsewhere in the City. Similarly, multifamily residential development also continues at a steady rate.

5. How other areas designated for similar development will be, or are unlikely to be affected if the proposed amendment is approved, and whether such designation for other areas should be modified also.

Since the proposed project is unique, staff believes that if the requested zoning proposal were approved for this property, there would be no need to modify the zoning designation for other areas since there are no similar developments.

6. Any other factors affecting health, safety, morals, or general welfare.

Staff is unable to identify additional factors other than those mentioned above that might affect health, safety, morals, or general welfare if this rezoning were approved.

In addition, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall not approve a planned development if it finds that the proposed planned development does not conform to applicable regulations and standards established by Section 130-125 of the Zoning Ordinance:

1. Is not compatible with existing or permitted uses on abutting sites, in terms of use, building height, bulk and scale, setbacks and open spaces, landscaping, drainage, or access and circulation features, within the standards established by this section.

Staff believes that the proposed amendment to the development plan for the previously approved mixed use development defined within this PD-M District will be compatible with existing and anticipated uses surrounding this property and in accordance with the land use recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

2. Potentially creates unfavorable effects or impacts on other existing or permitted uses on abutting sites that cannot be mitigated by the provisions of this section.

Staff is unable to identify any potentially adverse effects or impacts on other existing or permitted uses on abutting sites that has not been mitigated by the existing or proposed provisions of this PD-M District.

3. Adversely affects the safety and convenience of vehicular and pedestrian circulation in the vicinity, including traffic reasonably expected to be generated by the proposed use and other uses reasonably anticipated in the area considering existing zoning and land uses in the area.

Staff contends that the proposed amendment to the development plan for the previously approved mixed use development will improve the safety and convenience of vehicular and pedestrian circulation in the vicinity.

4. Adversely affects traffic control or adjacent properties by inappropriate location, lighting, or types of signs.

Staff contends that the proposed amendment to the development plan will not adversely affect adjacent properties by inappropriate lighting, or types of signs. As the key purpose of this proposal; the number, placement, type and size of signage allowed is being specifically defined to limit negative impacts while providing a unified, upscale design aesthetic.

5. Fails to reasonably protect persons and property from erosion, flood or water damage, fire, noise, glare, and similar hazards or impacts.

Staff contends that if the proposed amendment to the previously approved development plan is approved, the plan will continue to reasonably protect persons and property from erosion, flood or water damage, noise, glare, and similar hazards or impacts, in conformance with applicable city ordinances.

6. Will be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity, for reasons specifically articulated by the commission.

Staff is unable to discern any impacts detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on all these considerations, staff **recommends approving** the requested amendment to the Traditions development Planned Development – Mixed Use District (PD-M) for these approximately 59 acres. As amended, the proposed development features on this property appear to be consistent with the land use recommendations of the Bryan Comprehensive Plan and will help promote orderly urban growth in close proximity to the existing lower density residential portions of The Traditions subdivision, the Bio-Corridor Planned Development District and the nearby Texas A&M Health Science Center.